

STOUFFVILLE

COMMUNITY

Truck statistics terrifying

It is absolutely terrifying. Trucks with cracked wheels, broken steering, no brakes and bald tires are hurtling past you and your family while you are in your car.

One hundred ton transports are carrying cargo of all sorts through our neighborhoods that should never have left the garage. And it is happening with alarming frequency.

In the recent crackdown, police pulled over 285 trucks. Of these, 175 were grounded, and many had their plates lifted.

Bloomington Rd. has always been a particular sore spot with drivers and local legislators concerned about the volume of truck traffic. It

Our View

appears there was something to be concerned with, after all. Many of the trucks pulled over at Goodwood were sand and gravel trucks, and many of these had their plates taken by police and ministry of transport officials.

Surprise inspections such as these are really bringing to light how serious the problems of the trucking can be. There are many in our area who maintain their vehicles beyond reproach, but there are others, and many from out the area and out of the province who are 90 kph time bombs.

The recession hit the trucking industry with unusual ferocity.

Many firms went under, but others cut where they could, and this usually meant costly maintenance. Many families likely have gone through similar problems. When there's bread to be put on the table, tuning up the car is not on the priority list.

But now this cutting back on basic maintenance is putting lives in danger.

Another spot-check is planned for this week. Truckers will be well-advised to have their vehicles tuned and inspected before taking to the highways.

There will be no more warnings. Truck operators who don't maintain their vehicle won't be behind the wheel; they'll be before a judge.

Stouffville Tribune

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Birthdays can be hazardous

I'm dreading Thursday. On that day, I will turn another page in the calendar of my life, and pick up another yard on the ol' grid-iron of time.

It's not the getting old I mind so much. It's the birthdays themselves.

I believe it was Swift who once said that no wise man ever wished he was younger.

I can see why. I think Swift probably had birthdays a lot like mine.

When I was five (I remember it like it was yesterday) I had a party for all the kids in our Sarnia neighborhood. We had only lived there about a year, and I wasn't exactly the Dale Carnegie of my peers.

However, this party, I felt, would be a great way to ingratiate myself in the neighborhood hierarchy. My parents pulled out all the stops for a backyard blow-out the kids would never forget: balloons on every fence-post, plenty of flames roaring from the kerosene-soaked barbecue, a huge

chocolate cake with 10s and 20s baked into it, a real clown, a real magician, a real pony, and a flock of ducks.

(The ducks came with the pony. It was supposed to be a travelling petting zoo, but the goat died the week before, and the zoo owner was forced to keep his only other zoo animal, a shaggy old dog, in the van on account of proximity of barbecued hamburger.)

It was a beautiful late-spring day.

All the children came bearing gifts. Most brought Tippee-Teepee games, or a bag of marbles, but I was told it was the thought that counted.

The party was going great until the magician stepped up.

He had the Birthday Boy as his assistant. For his big finale, he told my awe-struck new friends that I was going to mesmerize them with a feat they would never forget. I had no idea what I was doing, but the



magician made me say some sort of magic word, and just then a little girl in the crowd screamed. She pointed behind our heads to an enormous funnel cloud forming on the horizon, bearing down on the city.

Everyone scrambled into the basement as the wind began to howl, and in the panic, the clown tripped over his big shoes and fell into the duck enclosure. The ducks took to the air with their new-found freedom, but were soon buffeted by the high winds all over the block.

The balloons popped against the fence, the pony broke free in the melee then knocked the cake off the picnic table.

As we watched in horror from the basement window,

the pony bumped into the magician's equipment which slammed into the barbecue. Hot coals and trick cards went spilling onto the lawn and the resulting sparks were fanned by the mounting winds.

Once the threat of the tornado passed, (it just skirted the edge of the city), and once the fire department left, we went out to survey the damage. My friends had all gone home, no doubt extolling to their parents about the worst birthday party in the history of mankind.

The backyard was strewn with feathers, playing cards, bits of cake and about a million Teepee pieces. There was an acrid burnt grass smell in the air, mixed with the odor of a very nervous equine.

The petting zoo man was off collecting his frazzled ducks, and the clown and magician gathered up their things and left without waiting to be paid.

Anyway, I probably cried, but I can't remember because I was still in shock and denial that some force would want to deny a five-year-old a simple birthday party.

The next year was no better because I had a summer cold, and when it came time to blow out the candles, I sneezed instead, and no one would eat the cake.

It has been that way ever since, but now when the day comes for me to get a little older, I just go directly into the basement and hope the storm will blow over.

Tank runneth over in flood

It never rains but it pours.

One day last week I was getting ready to pick up my son from a friend's house when I noticed it was raining. Which was odd, since I had not yet abandoned the portals of Chateau Gilderdale.

It took me a while to clue in because, as usual, my mind was elsewhere and I don't generally think much about whether or not I should carry an umbrella when I'm traversing the dining room.

Still, it was hard to go on being unaware after I'd stepped in a puddle.

I glanced up to locate the source of the dampness now seeping unpleasantly through my sock and there it was, water dripping steadily from two large cracks in the ceiling.

Something's leaking, I thought, with characteristic brilliance.

I rushed upstairs to find water spraying merrily from the toilet tank. I lifted the lid and discovered that the pipe on the what-sit had become detached.

I re-attached it. For a few seconds, the tide appeared to have turned, but then it fell off again. In desperation, I gave it another shot and this time it remained in place, albeit somewhat precariously.

Meanwhile, the water in the tank continued to run, although with a lot less gusto.

So I found a bit of wood and wedged it under the thing that holds up that big bulbous rubber gizmo to keep it out of the water.

Plumbing has never been my forte, but a primitive understanding of the mechanics of that trade must be implanted in my subconscious, because it seemed to do the trick.

By the time I had finished my temporary repair job, however, there was water on the rug, the



floor and one of the antique chairs in the dining room and the ceiling was looking decidedly the worse for wear.

Meanwhile, the cat was prowling happily around the disaster zone, twitching when an occasional raindrop landed on his tail and leaving a trail of soggy footprints all over the French polished dining room table.

I gathered towels and buckets and did my best to soak up the worst of the damp, but one area of the ceiling continued to drip relentlessly.

Eventually, after further mopping up operations in the bathroom, it ceased and desisted.

I left to pick up my son late and feeling sorely harassed. A friend was coming to dinner and I'd be lucky to get home in time.

Luckily, Mr. Wallethead had already volunteered to pick up food from our favorite takeout on the way back from the office. I just hoped he wouldn't have to hire Noah to get into the kitchen with it when he arrived.

To my amazement, almost everywhere was drying off nicely when I got back.

Our friend phoned to say he'd be late, so we spent the next half hour frantically doing the tidying up from which I had been sidetracked during the Great Flood.

By the time our visitor arrived, the only overt signs of the battle of the bathroom were a few brownish stains on the ceiling. And heartfelt gratitude that my tank no longer runneth over.

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Letters should be no more than 500 words in length and can be typed or neatly handwritten. Your letters can be on any topic, but The Tribune reserves the right to edit for length, libel, grammar and spelling and good taste.

Letters will not be returned, unless requested of the editor. Due to space constraints, not all letters may be published, however, we endeavor to print as many as possible within a time frame that maintains news value and topicality.

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